

Media art and economics: resources

by [Chuck Kleinhans](#)

This resource piece is basically a set of bibliographic notes for my essay in this issue on the “creative industry” hype. In addition, it is a work in progress, and I will be updating it in upcoming months. The overall topic, media art and economics, is almost boundless. What I’m highlighting here are things I found useful for my essay and other materials that can contribute to further analysis. It’s probably worth mentioning that I didn’t come to a radical economic analysis of media from a theoretical position but because of practical experiences I had in working in, with, and around the media and people who work in the field. Again and again, it became clear to me that economics plays an important role in media work. Also my own experience of trying to do aesthetic and cultural analysis and being puzzled by certain things brought me to see economics as often an important factor in what I was observing.

Frequently people who do political economy of media and those who do cultural/aesthetic analysis of media have had antagonistic relations. In some quarters that remains contested terrain, but over the past few decades, sometimes grudgingly, many scholars have seen the usefulness of drawing from both approaches.

Annotated bibliography

----- (2008). "Plutocracy Reborn [chart]." *The Nation*, June 30, 24-25.
Graphic depiction of increasing economic inequality in the U.S.

----- (2010) *Creative Economy Report 2010: Creative Economy: A Feasible Development Option*.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development study promotes creative economy as solution to development woes.

----- (2010). Special Issue: Media and the Global Recession. *Popular Communication*, Vol. 8 (3).

Assorted topics on the central theme

----- (2010) “German shift from coal to culture leaves Turkish workers

behind." *Hurriyet Daily News* 5

Coal miners and steel workers from Turkey in the Ruhr region cannot move into the new creative culture jobs being developed there.

----- (2011) *Mother Jones*, July-Aug.

Special issue on "All Work and No Pay," on speedup in the workplace.

----- (2011) *Mother Jones*, Mar-April.

Special issue on "The Vampire Economy" on economic inequality.

----- (2011). The Reviving Downtown. *Wired*, June, 134-135.

Thoughtless pursuit of the Florida thesis finds the urban boom in Omaha (home of Warren Buffet, Berkshire-Hathaway, Mutual of Omaha Insurance, etc. but that is not mentioned) started due to trendy restaurants and indie bands!

Abbing, H. (2002). *Why Are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press.

Dutch economist, who is also an artist, looks at the fact that artists choose to remain artists, despite poor chances at financial stability or success, in defiance of orthodox economic assumptions. On investigation, he discovers that they value what they are doing more than making a lot of money. The book serves as a useful comparison to and extension of Leonard on current neo-bohemians.

Abbing, H. (2002). *Why Are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts* [summary].

<http://www.hansabbing.nl/DOCeconomist/SUMMARY.pdf>

Free summary of the book.

Anheier, H. and Raj Isar, Y. (2007) *Conflicts and Tensions*. Los Angeles, Sage. Massive global data collection of global culture and presentation in graphic format. Stimulating for a browse since the data range from religious pilgrimage tourism to Disney Corp as a worldwide enterprise. Covers all kinds of things from comparison of national movie attendance to patent law to employment of cultural workers.

Bousquet, M. (2008). *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation*. New York: New York University Press.

Essential guide to the economic and structural situation of higher education in the U.S. Explains the nature of academic labor and the current changes, especially replacing tenure with adjunct teachers.

Caldwell, J. T. (2010). "Breaking Rank: Backdoor Workforces, Messy Workflows, and Craft Disaggregation." *Popular Communications* 8: 1-5.

Economic pressures for speedup in media production combined with digital production technologies change the workplace and worsen labor conditions and quality.

Cavanagh, J and Collins, C. (2008) "The New Inequality: The Rich and the Rest of Us," *The Nation*, June 20, 11-12.

Caves, R. E. (2000). *Creative Industries: Contracts between Art and Commerce*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

From a framework of traditional economics, Caves examines the artist/market interface with a rigorous look at contracts, the legal relationship of various interests. Ranging widely through book publishing, visual arts, cinema, recorded music, theatre and performance, the study illuminates what is at stake and how it is negotiated.

Deuze, Mark. Deuzeblog.

<http://deuze.blogspot.com/>

Media scholar blogs on a variety of topics, but often on the job market and economics of media. Useful links to other blogs on similar interests.

Deuze, M. (2010) *Managing Media Work*. Sage.

Anthology on management issues in the creative industries.

Florida, R. (2011) Blog on *The Atlantic*.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/richard-florida/>

Short and fairly upbeat blog entries on assorted issues including jobs for "creative class" workers.

Garnham, N. (2005). "From Cultural to Creative Industries: An analysis of the implications of the "creative industries" approach to arts and media policy in the United Kingdom." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11(1): 15-29.

The change to the term creative industries draws on the prestige of IT and Communications to (wrongly) justify the cultural sector as a growth area in the global economy. Essentially it supports a supply-side economics of state subsidies that results in reduced access to culture.

Institute of Career Guidance, (2009). *Tough Job to Get into UK's Creative Industries*.

<http://www.icg-uk.org/article618.html>

Entry into creative industries is difficult and often depends on personal contacts or unpaid work to get the first job. The area remains overwhelmingly white, and there is very little access for minorities.

Hacker, A. (1997). *Money: Who Has How Much and Why*. New York: Scribner.

Statistical-driven analysis of U.S. society, the expansion of the super-wealthy, and the failure to improve the poor. Excellent discussion of trends up to the mid-90s with specific data.

Hartley, J., Ed. (2005). *Creative Industries*. Malden MA: Blackwell.

Expansive collection of 30 essays on the Creative Industries approach, including background, context, and promotion of the idea. Editor admits to his boosterism; offers cranky hostility to more left and progressive views.

Harvey, D. (2010). *The Enigma of Capital and the Crisis of Capitalism*. New York: Oxford.

Discusses the current crisis of global capitalism in terms of the deep underlying reasons and the fundamental shifts in the transformation to a global economy. These deeper structures are crucial to grasping the whole rather than just the epiphenomenal aspects of subprime loans and mortgage securitization. Bursting the credit bubble revealed capitalism's weaknesses and flaws; Harvey proposes a new economy to match human needs over capital.

Hesmondhalgh, D and Baker, S. *Creative Labour: Media work in Three Cultural Industries*. London: Routledge.

Theoretical synthesis and empirical study (via interviews) of labor in industrialized culture, including music, television, magazine sectors. Especially illuminating for students thinking of a media career.

Horowitz, N. (2011). *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Examines the contemporary high art market in term of financial considerations. How artists are drawn into merchandizing and branding and packaging their work. Includes a discussion of video art as entering the high speculation gallery world.

Howkins, J. *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*. (2007 updated ed.)

Stronger on motivational speaker enthusiasm than thorough analysis. (See thin discussion of cinema industry.) Sees creativity as the solution to all economic and social problems.

Huws, U. (2003). *The Making of a Cybertariat: Virtual Work in a Real World*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Key study of women as labor in the current electronic technology environment.

Kapur, J. and Wagner, K.B. (2011) *Neoliberalism and Global Cinema: Capital, Culture, and Marxist Critique*. New York, Routledge.

Anthology of articles on various national cinema traditions.

Lash, S. and C. Lury (2007). *Global Culture Industry*. Cambridge UK: Polity. Another attempt to update Adorno for the global era. While thin on economic analysis, the study of branding and marketing of material objects (watches, sportswear) and symbolic spectatorship—from movies to sports—is important for explaining the power and success of global symbolic production.

Lloyd, R. (2006). *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York: Routledge.

Extremely valuable study of Wicker Park neighborhood in Chicago in transition from a low rent bohemia to a chic upscale condo neighborhood, as suburban lawyers and businessmen return to the city with their new trophy

wives. Acutely studies both eager and aspirant artists as well as their collected presence as audiences, wait staff, and local color in a neo-bohemian environment.

Mayer, V., M. J. Banks, et al., Eds. (2009). *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*. New York: Routledge.

A variety of studies on how media production is organized industrially. Especially useful historical chapters on Leo C. Rosten's analysis of 40s Hollywood, and copyright and collective bargaining.

Miller, T. (2004). "A View From a Fossil: The New Economy, Creativity and Consumption—Two Or Three Things I Don't Believe in." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7(1): 55-65.

Questions of labor have been ignored in cultural studies and the new economy. Rather than focusing on consumption and meaning, attention should be paid to the international division of labor.

Miller, T. (2009). "From Creative to Cultural Industries: Not All Industries are Cultural, and No Industries are Creative." *Cultural Studies* 23(1): 88-99. Argues strongly against the premises of "Creative Economy" and "Creative Industries." Despite claims, there is no evidence that a "creative class" has developed or that "creative cities" do better economically. The Creative Industries hype tries to place the humanities at the center of potential economic growth but totally ignores the nature of labor and the actual control of production by capital and conglomerates.

Miller, T. (2010). "Culture + Labour = Precariat." *Communications and Critical/Cultural Studies* 7(1): 96-99.

Given the neoliberal present, cultural analysis needs to be infused with a fresh understanding of labor. Salaried intellectual workers are increasingly being replaced by precarious, casualized labor.

Miller, T. (2010). "My Global Financial Crisis." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 34(4): 432-438.

The neoliberal discourse of knowledge work (creative economy and industries) must be reconceptualized to account for deep structural inequality in wages and stable employment in the New International Division of Labor.

New-Deal-of-the-Mind (2011) *Youth Unemployment and the Future Jobs*. 5 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmworpen/memo/fjf/fjf28.htm>

Written evidence submitted about Future Jobs Fund, which subsidizes youth to gain entry level creative sector jobs. Many cannot afford to work for free (a common pathway into creative jobs). However the subsidy lasts only 6 months; smaller and regional employers often cannot hire the interns at the end of the time. 85% of creative businesses employ less than 5 people. Creative sector entrepreneurs and artists tend to work in clusters.

Oakley, K. (2004). "Not So Cook Britannia: The Role of the Creative

Industries in Economic Development." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7 (1): 67-77.

UK policy and practice in promoting creative industries for economic development have not yet demonstrated that they work. Creative industries promotion cannot solve aspects of development which are essentially social and political in nature.

Ross, A. (1998). *Jobs in Cyberspace. Real Love: In Pursuit of Cultural Justice*. New York: NYU Press: 7-34.

Early study of labor in the 1990s Info Tech bubble, and other cultural issues.

Ross, A. (2003). *No-collar: The Humane Workplace and Its Hidden Costs*. New York: NYU Press.

Work in the Silicon Valley/Silicon Alley environs where casual clothing and behavior accompanies punishing schedules and high pressure work.

Ross, A. (2009). *Nice Work If You Can Get it: Life and Labor in Precarious Times*. New York: NYU Press.

Acute study of the increasing trend to use temporary and lower-paid workers without benefits to replace full time workers protected by regulations and unions and professional standards.

Steinert, H. *Culture Industry* (2003 translation [1998]). Cambridge UK: Polity Press.

Reworks Adorno's concept for the contemporary world; short journalistic case studies add specifics for today. Unusual example: Carolee Schneeman.

Sugarman, J. (2011). "Intern Nation": Are We Exploiting a Generation of Workers? *Salon*, Salon.com.

Interview with author of *Intern Nation*, Ross Perlin, on labor exploitation

Thompson, D. (2008). *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Serious journalistic survey of the high art market as a business phenomenon. Lots of examples of market weirdness.

Vavanagh, J. and C. Collins (2008). "The New Inequality: The Rich and the Rest of Us." *The Nation*. 286: 11-13.

Werner, Paul. *Museum, Inc.: Inside the Global Art World*. Prickly Paradigm Press.

Witty polemic about the economics of the high art world of museums, dealers, galleries.

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